Fowl
Feathered
Review
Kewpsox
№ 251

ISSUE № 251: Accepted as Fragment,
Declared Sufficient

About the Assemblage (Collected Under Practical Conditions)

The FFR is no longer to be understood as a journal, nor as any prior category such as "Necrosign." It is instead a distributed production practice: a gathering-method for the generation, capture, and long-duration storage of emergent artifacts arising between human habit and mechanical repetition.

For ease of handling, we describe it as a shared frequency—commonly misidentified as the idle-pattern of a small automobile (late 20th-century compact class) standing in a parking lot at approximately 03:00—but this is merely the audible index-layer.

In its working state, the Assemblage conducts continuous retrieval from verifiable material domains: instruction sheets, retail surfaces, transit markings, service logs, and other document-objects of daily use. These are not preserved intact. They are subjected to pressure, displacement, and reclassification.

We do not curate in the modern sense. We maintain instead an **Offenrückraum** (open-back space), in which items may enter, settle, or misfile themselves.

Participants (hereafter: “important locals”) are those who exhibit **Dauerträgheit**—a useful persistence under minor strain. Fragility is not prohibited, but it is structurally unsupported.

Any submission that appears to strive toward “Art” in the self-declarative sense will be reassigned to a more stable function (e.g., table-leveling, draft-blocking, oil-absorption).

On the Operation of Source-Engines (Always in Partial Motion)

The Assemblage employs several standing procedures, here summarized for clarity:

- **Warenregisterbruch (Arcade Index Condition)** Fragments are extracted from catalogs, labels, packaging, and signage. Context is removed. Adjacency is reassigned. Authority increases in proportion to specificity, regardless of accuracy.
- **Protokollhäufung (Dossier Stack Condition)** Records accumulate: maintenance notes, claims, timestamps. Gaps are preserved. Contradictions are not resolved. A sequence may appear, but closure is considered a filing error.
- **Randbemerkungsdrift (False Commentator Condition)** Functional texts (manuals, glossaries, guides) are annotated beyond their tolerance. Explanations become misaligned. Confidence is retained.
- **Anweisungsschnitt (Cut-Up Recorder Condition)** Instruction-language is segmented and recombined. Repetition introduces rhythm. Meaning is reduced until only procedure-residue remains.

All outputs must retain **Rückverfolgbarkeit** (trace-feel): the impression that the fragment could be located again in some drawer, binder, or glove compartment.
Where this condition fails, the material is considered decorative and is removed.
A recurring sonic marker—transcribed provisionally as **"dor"**—is permitted to enter any layer. Its function remains under study.

The Staff (Sink-Custodians / Function-Bearers)

- **Virgil Kay**: Final Arbiter. Currently engaged in the classification of falling bakery items under aerodynamic variance. Maintains decision authority, though criteria are mobile.
- **Silent Bill**: Overseer of Tactical Non-Sequiturs. Executes **Satzabbruchhandlung** (sentence-break action) by leaving mid-utterance. This is considered a valid editorial intervention.
- **Unkie Bob**: Assigned to Casual Entropy. No longer dismantles structures directly; instead applies insufficient fastening (**Lockerbefestigung**), allowing failure to emerge without announcement.
- **The Unnamed Dishwasher**: Not recorded in official listings. Present regardless. Performs continuous surface-restoration under high focus. Functions as **Kerntriebwerk** (core engine). Prolonged observation is discouraged.

The Perpetual Pending Pledge (Standing Condition)

The Review is not offered for sale; it is made available.

All incoming funds are classified as **Zweckfreie Gaben** (non-instrumental offerings), directed not toward exchange but toward sustaining an ongoing condition designated Obsession8888.
The registry has been converted from numeric to vibrational notation:
Vi · ∞ · 432Hz
Field reports indicate this frequency may present not as tone but as mechanical rattle (loose shielding, low-end vibration). This is not considered deviation.
The 9-volt battery is dead. Its status remains in force.

Submission Protocol (Practical Intake / Repurposing Priority)

1. **The Material**
   Submit between 2 and 953 fragments. Acceptable forms include text, image, diagram, list, or overheard exchange (e.g., dispute regarding bowling technique). Each item must exhibit **Gebrauchsnähe** (proximity to use): it should resemble something that once functioned or was handled.
2. **The Accompanying Note**
   Do not provide institutional histories or award listings. These do not transfer under current conditions.
   Instead, supply one of the following:
   - A preferred industrial fastener
   - A tool of uncertain purpose
   - A sound indicating possible malfunction
3. **The Offering (Optional but Structurally Relevant)**
   Submission remains free under the Perpetual

Pending Pledge.
However, contributors may include a 12-inch sandwich as a material supplement.

Kewpie Clause (Unrevoked):
Absence of Kewpie Mayonnaise results in immediate reassignment of submitted materials to cleaning or leveling functions.
Kewpie remains the only verified buffer against a system-wide condition provisionally termed the Absolute Cosmic-Cluck.

4. **On Repurposing (Important Clarification)**
All submitted materials enter a **Weiterverwendungskreis** (cycle of further use).
Possible outcomes include:
• Inclusion as fragment within a larger construct
• Mislabeling and redistribution
• Use as structural support (physical or textual)
• Reduction to residue for future recombination

Authors retain attribution only in the loosest archival sense. Function supersedes origin.

5. **Delivery**
Materials may be delivered, transmitted, or misplaced. Retrieval is opportunistic. Loss is considered a form of delayed submission.

Park and Ride (Ingest Points / Known Coordinates)
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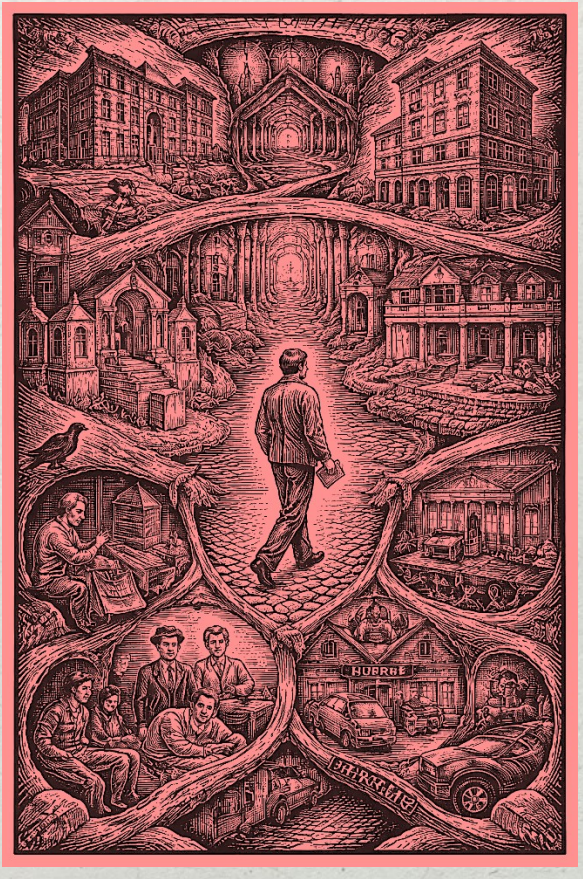
Physical: 250.50∞ State Street, Bangor, Maine, 04401
Erratum:
If the registered frequency resolves as a rattle rather than

a tone, no adjustment is required. The rattle is to be understood as a valid form of expression.

If a unit accepts value while returning the object, the transaction is considered complete.

"NON IGNORA MALI, MISERIS
SUCCURRERE DISCO."

— Virgil, The Aeneid


HUGRAF

A Compendious Anatomy of Bangor,

Being a Wunderkammer of Its Humours, Buildings, Graves, Bargains, and Other Persistent Irregularities

By Methuselah Aldrich

Late of the Office of Civic Enumeration; Compiler of Disordered Histories; Reluctant Systematist

In this our vast cabinet of Bangor, which is no city but rather a living Wunderkammer forever indexing its own strange humours, I shall now set down, after the ancient and melancholy fashion of my predecessor Robert Burton, a compendium of all its wonders, follies, buildings, graves, bargains, and personages, mingled together without separation or subtitle, as one continuous river of observation wherein the reader may dip and find both delight and disquiet. Bangor is not built of stone and timber alone. It is also built of things that do not stay put.

For Bangor is composed of memory that refuseth to be compressed, of streets that behave like marginal notes to a manuscript long lost, and of every inhabitant who, wittingly or no,

becometh a scribe in the great unfinished catalogue of that which will never be fully seen. The whole doth initialise itself without leave, and continueth its quiet labour by the friction betwixt brick, river, and uncertain weather.

A man slipped on ice here last winter and no two accounts agree on where. Behold first that vast psychiatric pile which standeth at the edge of civic knowing, where treatment, history, and the residue of old walls do interpenetrate without end or resolution. Its corridors are memory itself refusing to be shortened; its sealed chambers citations that point nowhither stable. Even the silence there is architected. Through this place the unconscious of the town still floweth, whether the living will confess it or no.

The building is partly in use and partly in story.

Hard by lieth the garden of secondary deaths, a Victorian necropolis whose once-orderly paths have begun to wander like speculative philosophy. The stones drink humidity; the mausoleums serve as footnotes to passing clouds. The dead utter nothing, yet their very arrangement argueth among themselves. Every grave is a sentence that hath forgotten its predicate.
Someone mows there in straight lines that do not match the paths.

Not far thence riseth that hotel which added unto itself a floor, not forward in pride but backward in correction, so that the whole edifice now standeth misaligned with its former self. Tenants dwell in a vertical contradiction; staircases deliver them

to spaces historically adjacent yet causally doubtful. The building is not ruined; it is merely re-edited where it standeth.

A door on the third floor opens onto a wall that used to be a hallway.

Observe also the double houses of mirrored function, where domestic life is repeated across paired units with such strict symmetry that the architecture itself beginneth to resemble experiment rather than habitation. Lives unfold in parallel adjacency; even disagreement here falleth into symmetrical phrasing, as though echo were the true landlord.

On trash day, both sides put out the same broken chair.

Within the courthouse justice is administered in open chambers, whilst

another floor persisteth above or behind, reachable only by mechanical inference. Machines do their work where arguments cannot climb. Law in this place is not spoken but processed in hidden strata.

There is a room no one can tell you how to enter, though its lights are sometimes seen on.

Then there is the mercantile transmuter, where certain regional figures once turned automobiles into brief narrative events; commerce became performance, and performance civic myth. Every bargain was a short-lived engine of fable, and every advertisement outlived the vehicle it once praised.
A car once sold here is still described more vividly than the man who bought it.

Into this same cabinet I now pour the shadowed figure of Glenn A. Geiser Jr., operator of My Maine Ride and Bangor Car Care, whose dealings distilled themselves into complaints, filings, and a temporary banishment from honest trade betwixt the years 2014 and 2021. He standeth as a darker Mercury of cautionary tales, reminding all that every mercurial bargain may hide unseen dross beneath its glittering surface.

The paperwork is longer than the memory of the cars.

And now, seeker, having thus anatomised the places, I turn the glass upon the living and once-living humours of this same Bangor, divided after the old Galenic manner yet flowing together as one—though not all will consent to remain within their assigned vessels.

In the sanguine vein, full of fire and vital spirit, we find “Jolly” John, together with Bob Marley the comedian who carried the native wit of Bangor unto distant stages and screens; and Howie Day, whose voice first sounded from local rooms before it travelled outward and returned altered.

Someone remembers a joke differently every time it is told.

In the choleric humour, all ambition and lightning, appeareth Hannibal Hamlin, whose grave yet anchoreth the city’s spectre light; and the Brady Gang, who mistook Bangor for a quiet refuge and found instead an ending on a central street that refuseth to forget.

The street has been repaved, but not resolved.

The melancholic part, compounded of earth and deep contemplation, claimeth Stephen King himself, who transmuted these very streets, sewers, and burying-grounds into another town that will not stay fictional; with him walketh Waldo Peirce, whose colours exceeded containment; and Eddie Driscoll, whose late-night broadcasts once caused the air itself to feel slightly misaligned.

Some recordings cannot be found, though many insist they heard them.

In the phlegmatic temper, all water and quiet persistence, we number John B. Curtis, who turned spruce gum into a national industry; Charlotte Blake Brown, who forced open doors that did not intend to yield; and the unnamed recluses and itinerant vendors who persist at the margins,

dealing in cars, tools, or silence with equal indifference.
A man sat on a folding chair beside a handwritten sign for three weeks and then was gone.

Yet there is one who refuseth all such classification.

Each morning, at an hour before agreement, a man may be observed at the bus station who doth commence his walk not forward but backward, setting heel to unseen ground with a confidence that suggesteth either long practice or perfect indifference to consequence. Thus reversed, he proceedeth along his route toward Judy's on State Street, navigating curb, crack, and crossing by memory alone, or by some private geometry not shared with others.

He does not turn around.

Upon arrival, he entereth without ceremony, taketh the same seat, and ordereth French toast, but not in the common manner. He inquires instead after its present condition: whether the bread be yesterday's or this morning's, whether the egg hath been beaten to uniformity or left slightly streaked, whether the griddle holdeth a prior history of bacon, and whether the syrup floweth freely or with hesitation. These details he recordeth in a small notebook, writing without looking down for long, as though transcription and recollection were one act.

The waitress answers him the same way every day.

He eateth with care, neither hastening nor delaying, and when the plate is cleared he departeth as he came, though whether he returneth forward

or backward none can say with certainty, for observation at that point tendeth to fail or be forgotten. Some maintain he walketh only backward in the morning and forward in the afternoon; others that he never turneth at all but merely reorients the world around him by incremental refusal.

No one has followed him the entire way.

He cannot be placed within the humours. He neither accumulateth nor disperseth. He recordeth.

These several specimens do continually converse across the cabinet. The uneven floors of the old hotel stand but blocks from the site of the ambush; the crypts hold both the remembered and the invented; the decaying wings of the institution whisper across to the mechanical

strata of the courthouse. All are vessels in one Great Work: the slow transmutation of a river town into something half-abandoned, half-vibrant, forever alive with oddity.

A map printed last year already disagrees with itself.

Nor must we forget the labyrinth of cross-references: the institution of memory bleedeth into the garden of deaths, producing a shared tongue of containment and release; the hotel of backward revision answereth the courthouse of hidden floors; the mirrored houses reflect the mercantile performances, showing that repetition is no mere design but a strategy of survival.

Fragments drift unassigned: a street corner that changeth its face according to the humidity; a recorded voice that

advertiseth wares no longer sold; a block that refuseth coordinate stability; a name that repeateth itself across registers without relation; a river that floweth like editorial ink.

A receipt appears in a pocket for something never purchased.

Several entries remain missing yet indexed: structures of uncertain function, interiors belonging to buildings now renamed, events without primary document but rich in secondary echo. Absence here is no loss but an active layer; the system readeth through its own gaps.

Certain claims abide in contradiction: the cemetery is older than the city's memory of itself, yet the city remembereth only through the cemetery; the institution closed and reopened in overlapping accounts; the

courthouse hath seven courtrooms, and also those it will not acknowledge. The numbers change depending on who is counting.

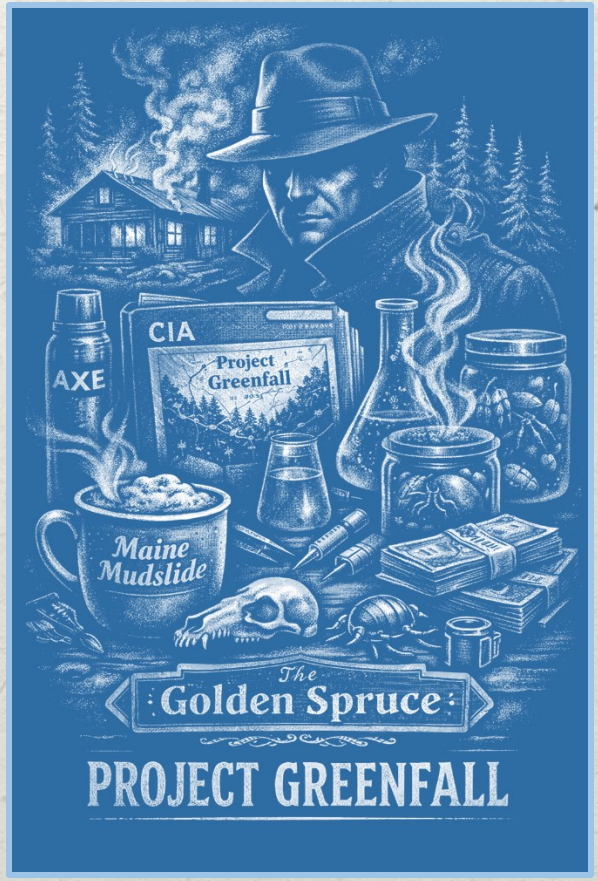
When contradictions accumulate beyond the patience of linear mind, the whole field reframeth itself: Bangor is not composed of sites but of pressures that recur; buildings stand not only in place but in argument; history advanceth by revision rather than by line.

This is not a theory but a description. Over time this Bangor becometh less a location than a procedural artefact: architecture behaveth like memory that hath forgotten its origin; men and women serve as temporary annotations; commerce generateth folklore faster than it may be checked; silence itself carrieth administrative weight. Its history is not written but

compiled from records that disagree with courteous persistence.

There remain parts deliberately unobserved—not hidden, but unfinalised: thresholds not entered, corridors not verified, possibilities not collapsed. These voids are operational. Thus the Compendium concludeth not. It stabiliseth only for a moment in readable shape, that interpretation may pass through it, then resumeth its proper transformation. Bangor continueth its quiet labour, becoming itself through partial contradiction, archival drift, and the slow accumulation of everything it hath not yet decided to be.

The cabinet remaineth open. The specimens continue to reorganise themselves nightly. And the system—without asking leave—keepeth writing.


CIA
Project Greenfall
AXE
Maine Mudslide
The Golden Spruce
PROJECT GREENFALL

The Café That Wasn't Just a Café

By Jasper "Jack" Thoreau

Contributing Editor, *Wired* | Former Senior Writer, *GQ* & *Rolling Stone*
Author of "The Last Honest Man in Las Vegas" and "Neon Ghosts: Dispatches from the American Weird"

BANGOR, MAINE — The first time I walked into The Golden Spruce, I knew something was off. Not in the way of bad coffee or surly baristas—no, the latte was too good, the maple syrup too pure, the pine sap too pungent. The place had the kind of curated

rustic charm that only exists in two places: Brooklyn and a CIA front. And as I'd later learn, it was both.

This is the story of how a potato latte, a bottle of Axe body spray, and a whole lot of bovine gas became the unlikely center of one of the most bizarre covert operations in American history—a program so secret that even the trees couldn't talk. But the trees did die. And that, as they say in Maine, was the first clue.

Chapter 1: The Latte That Wasn't Just a Latte
It was a damp September afternoon in 1975 when The Golden Spruce first opened its doors on Pine Street, Bangor. The town, a logging hub with a population that had seen its share of hard living, wasn't exactly a hotbed for artisanal coffee. But there it was: a café with reclaimed barn wood tables, Edison bulb lighting, and a menu that read like a love letter to Maine's wilderness. The signature drink? The Maine Mudslide—a

potato latte flavored with maple syrup and pine sap reduction.

Now, let’s pause here. A potato latte is the kind of drink that either makes you a genius or gets you committed. But in Bangor, it made The Golden Spruce an overnight sensation. Locals flocked in, drawn by the novelty, the cozy vibe, and the fact that the place seemed to have an endless supply of free samples. What they didn’t know was that the samples weren’t just for the coffee.

The café’s real specialty wasn’t caffeine—it was camouflage.

Chapter 2: The Man Behind the Maple Syrup Curtain

The owner of The Golden Spruce was a man named Elias Voss, a former forestry student from the University of Maine who, according to his bio, had "a passion for sustainable living and the great outdoors." Voss was the

kind of guy who could talk for hours about the subtle notes of birch syrup or the ethical sourcing of his potatoes. He was also, as I'd later discover, a man who had never once set foot in a forestry classroom.

Voss's real résumé was far more interesting. Before opening the café, he'd spent a decade in Southeast Asia, ostensibly working for a nonprofit agricultural collective. But the collective's name—Green Horizon Initiatives—didn't appear in any business directories, and its only known address was a PO box in Langley, Virginia.

When I finally tracked down a former employee of Green Horizon, a grizzled ex-logger named Dale "Stump" McGraw, he took a long pull from his Pabst Blue Ribbon and said, "Elias wasn't growin' nothin' but trouble. And I ain't talkin' about potatoes."

Chapter 3: The Menu That Wasn't Just a Menu

Let’s talk about the menu at The Golden Spruce, because it was a masterclass in misdirection. Every item had a dual purpose, a kind of culinary sleight of hand that would’ve made Houdini proud.

The Maine Mudslide (Potato latte with maple syrup and pine sap reduction): The pine sap wasn’t just for flavor. It was laced with DEET, a mosquito repellent that, in high concentrations, can be toxic to insects—and, as it turns out, certain types of trees. The café’s "signature foam" was a delivery system.

The Evergreen Elixir (Pine needle tea with a hint of birch): The birch wasn’t just for aroma. It masked the scent of Axe body spray, which was being tested as a pheromone disruptor for bark beetles. The idea? If you could confuse the beetles’ mating signals, you could control their population. Or, as one declassified memo later put it, "deny the enemy the forest."

The Moo Juice (Creamy oat milk with a hint of farm freshness): The "farm freshness" was bovine methane, extracted from a nearby dairy farm and piped into the café's basement. Why? Because methane, in the right concentrations, can suffocate tree roots. And if you're testing a biological weapon, you need a way to deploy it without raising suspicion. What better cover than a trendy café?

The Forager's Delight (Wild mushroom blend with earthy undertones): The mushrooms weren't wild. They were cultivated in a lab, part of a DARPA-funded project to develop fungal pathogens that could target specific tree species. The café was a test kitchen.

The café's most popular item, however, was off-menu: The Silent Harvest, a shot of "herbal extract" served only to "VIPs." The extract? A bark beetle pheromone cocktail, designed to lure the insects into traps

hidden in the café's compost bins. The traps were collected weekly by a rotating cast of "wilderness guides"—men with military haircuts and the kind of eyes that had seen things no man should see.

Chapter 4: The Forest That Started Dying

By the spring of 1976, the regulars at The Golden Spruce began noticing something strange. The trees near the café—first a few, then dozens—started to wilt and die. Not from disease, not from drought, but from something unnatural. The bark peeled away in strips, the leaves turned black, and the ground beneath them was littered with the carcasses of bark beetles.

At first, the townsfolk blamed it on acid rain or poor logging practices. But then the bees started dying, too. And the squirrels. And the local hunter's dogs, which had taken to digging up the café's compost bins and coming back foaming at the mouth.

The Bangor Daily News ran a front-page story: "Mystery Blight Strikes Local Woods—Experts Baffled." The experts were baffled, because the blight didn’t match any known disease. What they didn’t know was that the "experts" had been handpicked by Elias Voss.

One of those experts was Dr. Lillian Cross, a botanist from the University of Maine who had been hired to "study the phenomenon." When I tracked her down in a retirement home in Portland, she was still sharp as a tack—and still terrified.

"They told me it was a fungal infection," she said, her hands shaking as she sipped her tea. "But fungi don’t kill like that. And they sure as heck don’t leave behind residue that smells like Axe body spray."

Chapter 5: The Money Trail

If The Golden Spruce was the front, then the money was the lifeblood. And the money, as it turned out, flowed through one of the most notorious financial black holes in CIA history: Nugen Hand Bank.

Nugen Hand, an Australian private bank, had collapsed in 1975 amid allegations that it was a CIA money-laundering operation. But before it went under, it had funneled millions into shell companies around the world—including, according to a partially declassified CIA memo, a "forestry research initiative" in Maine.

That initiative was The Golden Spruce.

The café's books were a masterpiece of obfuscation. Revenue from "maple syrup imports" and "potato futures" masked the real income: black budget funds from the CIA's Shackley network, named after Theodore Shackley, the legendary (and notoriously off-the-books) spymaster.

Shackley, who had cut his teeth running Operation Phoenix in Vietnam, was the kind of man who didn't just bend the rules—he snapped them in half and used the pieces to pick his teeth.

The café's distributor, a company called Shaklee Wellness Partners, was another layer of the onion. Shaklee, a multi-level marketing giant, had a long history of moving money through its network of distributors. And while there's no evidence that Shaklee's leadership knew what was happening, the company's decentralized structure made it the perfect vehicle for off-the-books transactions.

As one former Shaklee distributor, a woman named Marge Holloway, told me: "We were just selling vitamins. But the checks? The checks came from someplace else."

Chapter 6: The Whistleblower Who Wasn't

The first person to publicly connect The Golden Spruce to the dying forest was a 22-year-old barista named Jesse Cole. Jesse had grown up in Bangor, and he'd taken the job at the café because it paid better than the lumber mill and came with free lattes. But Jesse was also a budding journalist, and he had a habit of asking questions.

One night, while closing up, Jesse found a locked door in the café's basement. He picked the lock (a skill he'd learned from his uncle, a retired safecracker) and discovered a lab. Not a coffee lab. A biological warfare lab.

Inside were microscopes, petri dishes, and jars of dead beetles. There were spray bottles labeled "Pine Fresh" (which smelled suspiciously like Axe body spray). And there was a notebook, its pages filled with coordinates, chemical formulas, and the words "Project Greenfall."

Jesse did what any self-respecting journalist would do: He took photos. He made copies. And he started asking around town.

That was his first mistake.

Three days later, Jesse's car was found at the bottom of the Penobscot River. The police ruled it an accident. His family accepted the explanation. But Jesse's notebook didn't surface until 2001, when a fisherman pulled it out of the river, wrapped in plastic and remarkably well-preserved.

The notebook's first page read: "If you're reading this, I'm already dead. But the truth isn't."

Chapter 7: The Cover-Up

By the time Jesse Cole disappeared, The Golden Spruce was already winding down. The forest was too far gone, the locals were too suspicious, and the CIA's attention had

shifted to bigger, bloodier games in Central America.

In June 1977, the café burned to the ground. The official report blamed a faulty wiring. But the fire marshal who investigated the scene, a man named Gary Boisvert, told me something different.

"That fire didn’t start in the kitchen," he said. "It started in the basement. And the only thing down there was that damn lab."

After the fire, Elias Voss vanished. Some say he moved to South America. Others claim he resurfaced in Langley. What we do know is that Project Greenfall didn’t end with the café. It just moved.

In 1978, a new café opened in Portland, Maine. It was called The Silver Birch. The menu was eerily similar. And the trees around it? They started dying six months later.

Chapter 8: The Legacy

Today, The Golden Spruce is a footnote in Bangor's history—a quirky café that burned down before its time. But for those who know where to look, the clues are still there.

The forest near Pine Street never fully recovered. The trees that grew back were stunted, twisted things, as if the land itself had been scorched by something unseen.

The bees never returned in the same numbers. Neither did the squirrels.

And if you dig around in the Bangor Historical Society's archives, you'll find a single, yellowed newspaper clipping from 1977, tucked away in a folder labeled "Miscellaneous – Unexplained Phenomena." It's a help-wanted ad for The Golden Spruce, seeking a "wilderness guide with experience in pest control."

As for me? I spent two years chasing this story. I talked to loggers, scientists, ex-CIA, and one very nervous former barista. I filed FOIA requests. I dug through declassified documents. And what I found was this:

The truth is stranger than fiction. But sometimes, fiction is the only way to tell the truth.

Epilogue: The Last Latte

I went back to Bangor last summer. The site of The Golden Spruce is now a parking lot for a Walgreens. But if you stand in the right spot, you can still smell the pine sap. And if you listen closely, you can almost hear the hum of the café's espresso machine, the clink of ceramic mugs, the laughter of customers who had no idea they were drinking the most dangerous latte in America.

I ordered a coffee at the Walgreens next door. It was terrible. But as I sipped it, I couldn't help but wonder:

What's in this one?

Jasper "Jack" Thoreau is a writer and investigative journalist whose work explores the intersection of culture, conspiracy, and the American landscape. His last book, "Neon Ghosts: Dispatches from the American Weird", was a New York Times bestseller. He lives in Portland, Maine, where he is currently at work on a history of New England's most bizarre unsolved mysteries.

Editor's Note:
This story is based on declassified documents, firsthand accounts, and the kind of rumors that only thrive in small towns and intelligence circles. Some names and details have been changed to protect the guilty, the paranoid, and the just plain confused.

If you have information about Project Greenfall, The Golden Spruce, or the whereabouts of Elias Voss, we'd love to hear from you. But maybe don't order the potato latte.

The Laundry
118 Gardiner Street

The Laundromat Suite (Ostinato)

By Keli Temple

A rose is a rose is a rose.
--Gertrude Stein

118 Garland Street does not sit. It loops.

Lint Free Laundry appears there like a sentence that forgot where it began, fluorescent, patient, endlessly mid-clause. The machines click—metronomes without composers—folding time into coin slots, folding coin slots into time. Nothing progresses. Everything agitates.

Across two houses of almost-nearness, Joe's Market hums its smaller

theology: ice in sweating bags, sugar in too many forms, cigarettes like punctuation, lottery tickets like prayers printed on cheap paper. A bright altar of postponement. You go in tired. You come out delayed.

Between them—laundry and market—the street is not distance but rinse cycle.

Inside the laundromat, a Victrola sits like an unlicensed prophet. It does not decorate the room. It corrects it. It insists on a song that is not music but recurrence: rose / rose / rose, each repetition slightly dirtier, slightly purer, never arriving.

A model train circles a miniature landscape that refuses geography. It keeps proving, over and over, that return is a form of knowledge. Click.

Click. Click. The proof does not conclude.

On a folding table: a thick book pretending to be history. The Last Two Million Years. It behaves like paper but thinks like weather. It is not read. It is rearranged. Its pages shift when not watched. Civilizations sit inside it like folded laundry that remembers being skin.

Curtis works near it without trusting it. Okafor Diallo stands as if the room agreed to balance itself through him. Mara—tie-dye, blonde, moving like she is being gently conducted by the machines—passes between dryers as though she is already part of their circuitry.

A mailman enters.

He is wearing a pith helmet and a mankini because the town no longer maintains category boundaries. This is not chaos. It is policy collapse so old it became weather.

No one reacts. Reaction has been outsourced.

He delivers mail by reaching into one system of fabric and retrieving another system of paper. The logic is split, but functional. Delivery continues. Meaning does not request permission.

Everything hums.

The hum is not sound. It is structure.

Inside that structure, garments shed their private histories. A shirt remembers a kitchen argument. A sock remembers pavement heat. A coat remembers being held too long in a

doorway that did not know whether to close. The machines do not erase these things. They redistribute them.

Lint is memory that refused to leave cleanly.

Joe's Market adds another ingredient to the system: a blue drink that looks like weather that lost its country. It travels back across the street like a small meteorological decision. When Mara drinks it, she does not taste flavor. She tastes branching outcomes—what she avoided, what she chose, what chose her instead.

Curtis turns a page.

The book turns back.

This is the first contradiction: no one is certain who is operating whom.

The pages no longer describe history. They correct it. Margins overwrite centers. Notes become roads. Hobo marks become routing systems for lost logic. Rivers refuse straightness. Jokes harden into instruction. Instruction dissolves into rumor. Everything migrates sideways.

Okafor says: recognition is not authorship.

Mara says: authorship is just repetition nobody has learned to hear properly.

The Victrola answers neither. It continues insisting on the rose, which is not a flower but a pressure. A smell that behaves like time when time forgets to be linear.
Outside, snow begins—not as weather, but as a visual correction. The street loses definition. Joe's Market becomes

a warmer blur. Lint Free Laundry becomes a brighter blur. Between them, the world is edited down to essentials: light, repetition, breath.

The train completes another loop.

Not progress. Not escape. Verification.

Curtis opens the book again and the book is different again. Of course it is. It always is. The difference is no longer notable; only continuous.

Inside it: a touring group that never arrives anywhere except as memory of having passed. A warning about roads that only appear after midnight rain. A receipt written in handwriting that belongs to no person but fits all hands.

The book is now clearly not a record.

It is a circulation system.

Everything inside it behaves like water remembering previous shapes of water.

And beneath that, something older: the insistence that nothing begins here. Nothing ends here. Only passes through.

Lint Free Laundry responds as if it understands. The dryers spin like small planetary disagreements that refuse resolution. Heat turns fabric into softened argument. Coins become tempo. Time becomes agitation.

Joe's Market continues its quiet provisioning of the night. Ice, sugar, caffeine, hope in small sealed units. The world does not need meaning as much as it needs repeatable substitutes for meaning.

Everything is supplied in manageable portions.

The mailman exits and re-enters as if exit and entry are now interchangeable verbs. His helmet tilts slightly, like a question that has given up expecting an answer.

The Victrola climbs higher, as if sound could become exit velocity. The rose is no longer metaphor. It is persistence itself, trying to become visible.

Curtis stops trying to read.

The book continues reading him.

Mara finishes the blue drink like it is a decision she made in another draft of herself. Okafor watches the machines with the attention of someone listening to an orchestra that is always slightly out of tune but never wrong.

The laundromat does not clean clothes.

It negotiates their past.

Everything that enters leaves slightly more distributed. Not resolved. Not improved. Just shared.

The snow thickens.

Edges disappear.

Inside the haze, the model train keeps circling its impossible geography, insisting that repetition is a kind of arrival that never admits it has arrived. The Victrola insists on the rose as if naming it repeatedly might eventually produce it. The book keeps rewriting what it already said, as if memory were a form of laundering.

And you—whoever you are in the system—are not outside this.

There is no outside.

Only varying degrees of participation.

The hum continues.

Not as background.

As condition.

As law without author.

As circulation without origin.

As a rose that refuses to stop becoming itself.

Walks like a Duck

By Levi Urich

The afternoon light over Veazie was the flat gray of river ice that has lost its shine. I pulled onto the shoulder of Route 2A just past the old mill foundations, engine ticking down in the cold. The man stood exactly where the pavement dropped toward the Penobscot, one hand half-raised like he was conducting slow traffic. Beard thick and graying at the edges, felt hat tilted with private opinion, clothes layered against a wind that had already decided winter wasn't finished. I reached behind the seat for two Cokes still sweating from the ice

I'd packed that morning and the ham-and-cheese sandwich wrapped in wax paper that crinkled when I handed it over. He took them without ceremony, fingers closing around the cold cans like the exchange had been waiting on the calendar for centuries. "Much obliged," he said, voice carrying a faint lilt that didn't quite belong to Maine but felt older than the trees.

That was the anchor: the cans were cold, the paper crinkled, the red clay on his boots matched the same earth that still washes out of Samuel Veazie's ruined millworks after every spring flood. Gen. Veazie had printed his own money here once, floated white pine logs down the Penobscot until the river ran thick as syrup with them. Nothing strange. Just a man on

the shoulder and a driver with extra food.

Yet the open book on the passenger seat had already begun its quiet drift. Page whatever showed the 1600 woodcut of William Kempe mid-morris, bells on his shins, the taborer grinning behind him with stick raised. Kempe, the clown who succeeded Tarleton in the public's affections, who quit the Lord Chamberlain's Men after a wager or a huff—history never settles which—and danced his own account from London to Norwich in nine dancing days spread across twenty-seven. He ate what farmers gave him, slept where they offered, collected coins and laughter like it was his proper wage. The roadside man cracked the first Coke; foam hissed over his knuckles and the sound snapped straight into memory. I saw the woodcut shift in the corner of my

eye the way pages do when wind catches them. His boots made a faint jingle when he shifted weight—loose laces, or something older. He bit into the sandwich with the same deliberate joy Kempe described when Suffolk men joined his dance for a mile, laughing, then peeling off again.

"You ever dance for a wager?" I asked, because the question had been sitting in my throat since the hat first caught my eye. He grinned around the bread. "Every day's a wager, friend. Some you win by walking."

That sentence felt like it had always been true, the way the Penobscot keeps rolling logs and stories downstream whether anyone is watching or not. Maine lumberjacks knew the rhythm: they'd jig in the camps after supper, blame Sock Saunders when the fiddle made the axe disappear, then hit the tote roads

looking for the next job. The Shagamaw was their private prankster—charged you full tilt, scared the piss out of you, then wandered off laughing, leaving you laughing too. Sounds like a clown deciding the stage wasn't big enough and taking the whole county road instead. Bangor still claims Paul Bunyan as its own, thirty-one feet of cheerful fiberglass lie, even though the tall tales started farther west. We need our giants to keep dancing the old routes.

He finished the Coke, crushed the can one-handed, and the aluminum pop rang bright as the bells in that woodcut. Bleed arrived then, soft and unremarked. Suddenly I could not remember whether the woodcut had actually moved or whether the memory of reading Kemp's Nine Daies Wonder had simply leaked forward into the present. The man wasn't

dressed like an Elizabethan fool—no visible bells, no tabor—but the way he stood, weight balanced for the next step, felt exactly like the dancer who had capered past the Lord Mayor's house while London tossed groats. I had just handed him two Cokes and a sandwich the way a Suffolk farmer once pressed ale into the clown's palm. The transaction had not changed in four hundred years; only the currency had.

He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and looked north toward the bend where the river curves out of sight. "Appreciate it," he said, and this time the voice carried the faint thump-pause-thump of the tabor just behind his shoulder. I blinked and the book was still there, woodcut static. But for one clear second the roadside man was

the woodcut—beard, hat, all of it—and then he wasn't, just another traveler on a Maine backroad where lumberjacks once told stories about devils with magic axes and creatures that scared you for sport.

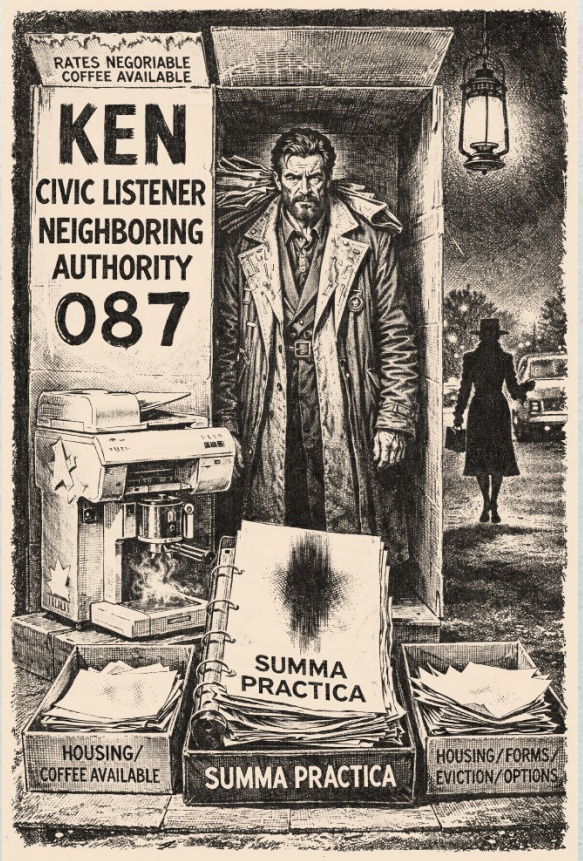
I didn't ask his name. Names close circuits; this one needed to stay open. He gave a small half-bow, more theatrical than necessary, and started walking north with the easy lope of a man who had already danced most of the distance in his head. The second Coke still made a cold outline in his coat pocket. The sandwich wrapper fluttered once against the guardrail, then settled like a small white flag between centuries.

Later, back in Bangor, the book will open to the exact same page. Kempe will still be mid-leap, taborer grinning, caption noting how he succeeded

Tarleton in the affections of the public. But tonight the road feels curated, the way a late-night radio hour strings songs you didn't know belonged together. Theme: men who turn distance into performance. Playlist causality—two Cokes, one sandwich, one morris step that never quite ends. The Penobscot keeps its secrets; Veazie keeps its ruins; and somewhere up ahead the next town will feed the dancer, same as always, because some wagers are older than the forests we cut down to build the towns.

The guy is already gone, but the rhythm stays in the tires. Thump. Pause. Thump. You hear it too, if you listen between the lines.

The ducks slide in quietly, like waterfowl on the Penobscot itself—mallards paddling the shallows with comic dignity, wood ducks flashing iridescent heads as they flare into flight, common eiders riding the cold swells with stoic endurance. They belong here the way the old morris rhythm belongs to the road: persistent migrants, comic survivors, living reminders that distance is just another dance, and the river always carries both the logs and the laughter downstream. The layers stay balanced, the local coherence intact in every moment, while the global drift quietly organizes the coincidences into a hidden playlist.


RATES NEGOTIABLE
COFFEE AVAILABLE
KEN
CIVIC LISTENER
NEIGHBORING
AUTHORITY
087
SUMMA
PRACTICA
HOUSING/
COFFEE AVAILABLE
SUMMA PRACTICA
HOUSING/FORMS/
EVICTION/OPTIONS

Summa Practica 087 — Broadcast Remix

By Ryan Warmbier

A detonated civic organism, now with wheels, dig?

The cardboard, see, was not finished being cardboard — and I mean that in the deepest sense, the way a cantor is not finished being a cantor when he steps off the bima, the way a horse is not

finished being a horse when they retire him to the apple orchard upstate where, presumably, he reflects on his glue-adjacent mortality between bites of Macintosh. This particular refrigerator box, parked at the lip of the Tree Streets like a freighter that had mistaken the curb for a pier, harbored *ambitions toward the architectural, toward a sort of vertical juris-diction against gravity, and so the Refrigerator Mantra stood guard at the edge of the Tree Streets with its painted layers refusing agreement—mint over gray over a*

wounded yellow, a tri-color flag of the displaced—while inside Ken arranged his instruments with a ceremonial precision that bordered on the theatrical, as if he were conducting the orchestra of the destitute. The copier was secured by tape where the hinge had fractured, a structural wound treated with ductwork faith, and the espresso device breathed steam in small intervals, puffing white ghosts into the cold air that smelled of old glue and possibility. Trays labeled HOUSING / FORMS / THINGS WE CAN TRY, and the enormous binder SUMMA

PRACTICA occupying the central plane like an altar that had survived several minor floods, its spine cracked but praying nonetheless.

Portable systems rely on choreography, see, more than they do on engineering, which is a fact nobody puts in the manual because manuals are written by people who think gravity is optional.

The lantern light moved across his beard as trucks passed,

briefly aging him into a version of himself that did not yet require confirmation, a ghost in the machine of the morning commute. He adjusted his layered coat—structured sleeves, clipped pins, textured fabric remembering another country, or maybe just another decade—and just as a woman approached with envelopes held close to her chest like she was hugging a sleeping infant. Envelopes generate pressure, physical tension stored in sealed corners, Red stamps altered her breathing, turning her exhale into a visible tremor in the frosty dawn. When Ken received

the documents with both hands—a small bow, precise nod—the air stabilized into a usable sequence, a sudden calm after the gale of anxiety.

Assistance begins by stabilizing tempo, pal, keeping the metronome steady so the dancer don't trip over her own laces.

Milk foamed into a glossy surface while he explained timelines in alternating languages, not announcing the transitions, slipping from English to

something older, deeper, like a secret handshake made of syllables. A droplet fell from the spoon onto a loose page and expanded. The stain remained. The page accepted it, absorbing the grief like blotting paper takes ink. Paper expands when saturated. Fibers swell. Edges curl. Ink moves. The binder SUMMA PRACTICA held photocopies, annotations, diagrams, handwritten accounts, tabs extending outward, thread visible where binding glue had separated, yet the spine continued to hold, defying physics through sheer willpower.

Authority emerges from visible labor, my man, from the sweat that gets absorbed into the margins.

The woman's shoulders lowered slightly. A teenager photographed the scene with a phone camera, capturing the image that would never match the memory of it. Ken continued without acknowledgment, turning to EVICTION / OPTIONS / TIMELINES while the lantern dimmed and recovered as the extension cord shifted in the cold, vibrating like

a living thing. Expectation organizes outcome, creating a feedback loop of hope that rarely loops back but keeps going anyway. Visitors arrived. Job disputes, housing fears, relationship questions, medical forms. Each entered through posture first, checking the floorboards, assessing the ceiling height. Ken listened with a forward lean and folded hands, allowing brief flashes of shared indignation, the common ground where we all meet to complain about the weather.

The copier produced a vertical black streak down every third page.

The flaw continued, a signature of the machine, a fingerprint of the ghost in the box. Validation precedes orientation. They filled the void together. Together they completed forms, drafted letters, located numbers, the digits appearing like stars in a constellation drawn by a trembling hand. Each action altered breathing. The room held. Neighbors began referring to him by number—Authority

087. He did not confirm or deny. At night he remained aware that the operation depended on extension cords, donated supplies, and cardboard whose lower edge continued to soften when snow melted against it. Legitimacy forms through repetition, the accumulation of small acts that build a dam against the rising tide.

He reorganized the binder after closing, adding sections, crossing out outdated information. Fatigue blurred letters. He continued. Birds arrive without

maps, fluttering in and out of the chimney flue, looking for crumbs of wisdom. Alone inside the box, he considered whether he was postponing adulthood or constructing it. The distinction did not resolve. He drank coffee that had cooled, tasting the bitterness that time leaves behind. The cardboard wall pressed inward with a low sound, groaning under the weight of the silence. Maintenance could be deferred.

He wrote a new page: WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW

WHAT TO DO. He did not finish it. Morning light passed through the walls, outlining seams. Frost traced temporary structures across the interior. He repainted a section of the exterior sign where moisture had removed the previous layer, re-lettering: KEN CIVIC LISTENER NEIGHBORING AUTHORITY 087. Rates negotiable. Coffee available. The letters held. A passerby paused, then entered. Entry aligned conditions. The binder remained open.

The box did not move. Weather introduced the possibility. For three nights Ken considered this before locating a folding tricycle behind a closed storefront, chain fixed in place, rear basket intact, hinge present at the center of the frame. The hinge suggested an alternative, a mechanical prayer wheel spun by the wind of commerce. He tested the mechanism. Pressure applied gradually. The frame resisted, then aligned. The hinge locked with a contained sound, a click that echoed in the alleyway like a verdict. The structure accepted

repetition. Integration required redistribution.

The binder moved over the rear axle. The copier was secured with cord. The espresso device was placed within a cut recess reinforced with tape, nestled in the cradle like a jewel. The box changed role. It became a load. It became luggage. It became the burden of mobility. The first movement occurred before sunrise. Temperature remained low. Condensation marked the interior surface, fogging the glass of the world. Ken guided the

trike along Garland Street. Turning required advance commitment, a physics lesson learned in real time. Weight translated into delayed response, inertia acting as a heavy-handed coach. Stability required anticipation. You gotta lean into the curve or you fly straight into the gutter.

Neighbors observed without conclusion, watching the spectacle of the civic transport. Recognition required additional passes. Ken selected a temporary position near Joe's Market. He

unfolded the structure. Tape held. The hinge aligned. Coffee resumed, piping hot, steam rising like a signal flare. The system reassembled. A man approached with a folded notice. He did not immediately extend it. Ken inclined his head. The man proceeded. Continuity established trust. The copier operated under slight vibration, humming a low note in F-sharp. The vertical streak appeared at regular intervals. The defect remained. Defects are the soul of the machine. Children circled at distance, one asked if it was a library, another asked if it was

food. A third asked if it was legal. Ken handed them the unfinished page. They accepted it. Instruction did not require completion.

By midday he had relocated twice more. Each movement reduced uncertainty, shrinking the map of the day to manageable chunks. The hinge showed minor play. He noted it. Future maintenance existed, a debt waiting to be paid. Different streets produced different problems. Employment questions near transit stops,

where wheels spin fast and feet don't stand still. Housing concerns near apartment clusters, stacked brick boxes smelling of cooking oil and secrets. At the river, questions extended in duration, flowing longer than the water itself. Geography filtered intake. An elderly woman declined coffee. She accepted assistance. Ken recorded: OFFER WITHOUT EXPECTATION. A new section formed. Wind increased. The cardboard flexed. The diagonal crush scar absorbed pressure without failure. Damage

improved performance, polishing the wood of the soul.

By the third stop, the questions had begun to repeat. Not the same people. Not the same documents. The same shapes—housing, time, permission, delay—arriving in a different order, shuffled deck of cards. Ken did not record this. The binder had no section for recurrence, no column for echoes. The route continued. By evening he returned to the original location. The structure folded. The hinge compressed

the day into reduced volume, squeezing the hours back into the cardboard casing. The box resumed its prior configuration. The system had not reduced. It had distributed. It spread the load across the landscape. Inside, he added a section: MOBILE OPERATIONS WHERE HELP IS NEEDED IS NOT FIXED STABILITY CAN TRAVEL. He paused, then continued. The same questions appeared in different voices. The route was organizing him, mapping a grid over his internal anatomy. Ink settled into the page. The spine adjusted.

Outside, the trike rested against the wall. The hinge held. The wheels aligned. The structure did not indicate whether it was at rest or waiting. Orientation determined interpretation. Morning would introduce new positions. The binder remained open.

The Bibliographic Perimeter

(Verified Edition)

Curated fragments from the Offenrückraum, where the ordinary has been pressed, displaced, and reclassified. Each entry now answers to the discipline of the catalog: no invented dossiers, no phantom broadsheets—only real volumes, documented reports, and attested accounts, though they continue to vibrate in their drawers. Approach with Dauerträgheit. The cabinet does not close.

The Secrets of Alchemy — Lawrence M. Principe (University of Chicago Press, 2013).

Observe, if you will, the spectacle of history refusing to sit quietly in its assigned chair. Here the furnaces are relit—not metaphorically, not symbolically, but with flame that blackens glass and persuades metals to reconsider their loyalties. Recipes once dismissed as allegory return as procedure, annotated in the margins by soot and insistence. The past, it turns out, is not past; it is merely awaiting correct temperature and sufficient nerve. One consults these pages the way an auditor examines a ledger that has begun, quite without permission, to total itself.

Real Alchemy: A Primer of Practical Alchemy - Robert Allen Bartlett (Ibis Press, 2009). No trumpets, no cloaks-only glassware, heat, and the slightly accusatory silence of substances that decline to behave. The author proceeds like a technician who has misplaced his skepticism but kept his notebook. Distill, calcine, repeat: the verbs march, the matter hesitates, and somewhere between them a small, persistent hum establishes residency. One begins to suspect that transformation is less an event than a condition-ongoing, mildly inconvenient,

and entirely unwilling to sign off at the end of the shift.

Contact with Space – Wilhelm Reich (Orgone Institute Press, 1957). Filed with admirable optimism under "reports," though it behaves more like weather with opinions. Boxes lined in alternating layers, tubes directed at the sky, a conviction that atmosphere may be persuaded—if not reasoned with, then at least addressed firmly. Authorities coughed; headlines fluttered; apparatus remained. One reads and encounters not proof but persistence: a man insisting that the invisible might yet be inventoried, provided one builds a cabinet large enough

and refuses, with admirable stubbornness, to close it.

"Maine's Potato King: The Rise and Fall of Jake Etscovitz." – The Forward (July 8, 2014). Columns of numbers marching across a page until, quite suddenly, they acquire personality. Acreage becomes ambition; yield becomes appetite; collapse arrives dressed as arithmetic. The article proceeds with the calm authority of documented fact while quietly demonstrating that documentation itself can develop a pulse. One finishes not with a lesson but with a rhythm: expansion, contraction, annotation–repeat as necessary.

The Stranger in the Woods – Michael Finkel (Knopf, 2017). Featuring Christopher Knight, who solved the problem of society by declining to participate in it—thoroughly, methodically, for nearly three decades. The documentation is impeccable: interviews, timelines, inventories of absence so precise they begin to resemble presence. Here is life reduced to continuation, to the quiet arithmetic of days that do not announce themselves. The remarkable fact is not that he vanished, but that the record remains, politely insisting that vanishing can be itemized.

"Bright Lights Over Central Maine" – Yankee Magazine (regional UFO reports, 1980s coverage). Witnesses speak; editors arrange; categories attempt, briefly, to assert jurisdiction—and fail with decorum. Lights traverse the sky with no evident respect for filing systems. The account proceeds sensibly, which only heightens the effect: the extraordinary presented in the tone of a grocery list. One is left with the distinct impression that classification, while admirable, is occasionally outpaced by events traveling at inconvenient velocities.

Quackery: A Brief History of the Worst Ways to Cure Everything - Lydia Kang & Nate Pedersen (Workman Publishing, 2017). A parade—no, a procession—of entirely sincere misjudgments, each documented with the crisp confidence of its era. Mercury, bloodletting, electrified optimism: remedies proposed, applied, regretted, and nevertheless recorded. The charm lies not in error but in its paperwork. One observes, with mounting appreciation, that the boundary between knowledge and enthusiasm is often negotiated after the fact, in ink that dries just slowly enough to permit reconsideration.

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks – Rebecca Skloot (Crown Publishing, 2010). Cells extracted, replicated, circulated—indefinitely, industriously, without the courtesy of conclusion. A life translated into a system that does not terminate. The documentation is meticulous, the implications expansive: material once classified as singular becomes, through procedure, innumerable. One begins to suspect that permanence is less a property than a side effect of sufficient attention.

Lab Girl - Hope Jahren (Knopf, 2016).
Here the pace adjusts-mercifully, insistently-to match that of roots, rings, and patient accumulation. Observation becomes the principal instrument; time, the primary reagent. Nothing declares itself; everything proceeds. The effect is cumulative, like interest compounded in a currency no one thought to regulate.

The Book of the Damned - Charles Fort (1919).
An archive of exclusions, assembled with a collector's zeal and a clerk's endurance. Reports rejected elsewhere find residence here, not reconciled but retained. The

result is less argument than accumulation—a steady pressure exerted by facts that decline to behave. One closes the volume (temporarily, optimistically) with the uneasy recognition that dismissal, too, leaves a trace.

The perimeter is not a list. It is a frequency.
It loops.
It agitates.
It waits—patiently, impeccably documented—for the next item to slip its label and enter the drawer at an angle.
The cabinet remains open. The entries continue their quiet negotiations. And the system, having discovered its own momentum, declines to conclude.

AUTHORIZED WHILE LEGIBLE
— KLEAN FITCH
THERMAL UNIT, FOWL FEATHERED REVIEW